



MOUNTAINS RECREATION & CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

Los Angeles River Center & Gardens
570 West Avenue Twenty-six, Suite 100
Los Angeles, California 90065
Phone (323) 221-9944

MEMORANDUM

TO: The Governing Board

FROM:  Joseph T. Edmiston, FAICP, Hon. ASLA, Executive Officer

DATE: June 6, 2007

SUBJECT: **Agenda Item V(i) : Consideration of resolution accepting a grant of Proposition 40 funds from the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy for the development and improvement of land and water resources at Towsley Canyon, Santa Clarita.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Governing Board adopt the attached resolution accepting a grant of Proposition 40 funds from the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy for the development and improvement of land and water resources at Towsley Canyon, Santa Clarita.

Background: Towsley Canyon offers numerous visitor serving amenities with easy access just off the I-5 freeway. Trails for hiking, mountain biking, and equestrian use lead visitors through an astonishing variety of habitat types. Towsley Lodge sits atop a large green knoll surrounded by cottonwoods. The lodge is used by visitors for meetings, weddings and small group overnights. Towsley Canyon burned in the fires of October 2003. MRCA staff saved the structures in the canyon including the lodge. In the heavy storms of the 2004-05 winter, the road in the park was damaged where it crossed the creek. The road has been repaired using FEMA funds.

While most of the facilities in the park are currently functional, some select capital improvements will make the park into a prime destination. Renovations need to be made to the Towsley Lodge including but not limited to roof repair, restroom renovation, new HVAC systems, lighting upgrades, replacement of exterior and interior finishes, and new meeting and overnight furniture.

The large shady, lawn that spreads out just below the lodge serves as a lovely informal picnic area and special event space. The large trees in the lawn and in the surrounding landscape suffered in the 2003 fire. Some need to be removed and replaced with new trees such as sycamores and oaks. Irrigation to the lawn and planted areas also needs to be improved. Additional capital expenditures are necessary to provide safe and enjoyable public access including some new fencing and interpretive signage.

It is anticipated that the improvements to the park would be completed by both in-house staff and outside consultants.

Consideration: The grant from the Conservancy would be in the amount of \$250,000.